

IN THE CLAIMS

1.-15. (Canceled)

16. (New) An isolated variant type I interferon beta (IFN- $\beta$ ) relative to wild-type human IFN- $\beta$  (SEQ ID NO:15) protein comprising the modification F8E, wherein the solubility of said variant IFN- $\beta$  is greater than the solubility of wild type human IFN- $\beta$ , and wherein a non-polypeptide moiety is not conjugated at F8E.

17. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 16, wherein said variant further comprises the modification L5Q.

18. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 16, wherein said variant further comprises the modification F111N.

19. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 16, wherein said variant further comprises the modification L116E.

20. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 16, wherein said variant further comprises the modification L120R.

21. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 16, wherein said variant further comprises the modification C17S.

22. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 21, wherein said variant further comprises at least one modification selected from the group consisting of L5Q, F11N, L116E and L120R.

23. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 21, wherein said variant further comprises at least two modifications selected from the group consisting of L5Q, F11N, L116E and L120R.

24. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 21, wherein said variant further comprises at least three modifications selected from the group consisting of L5Q, F11N, L116E and L120R.

25. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 21, wherein said variant further comprises the modifications L5Q, F11N, L116E and L120R.

26. (New) An isolated variant IFN- $\beta$  according to claim 21, wherein said variant further comprises the modification L5Q.